Module 4 Thoughts

Included are a couple of the quotes and thoughts that were shared in Module 4 as you move forward with your preparation and practice in collaborative coaching conversations.

* Peter Block, author of *Flawless Consulting,* says that you can measure your work as a coach by the *optimism* and *self-sufficiency* you leave behind.
* Tom Landry, football coach, said “a coach is someone who tells you what you don’t want to hear so that you can see what you don’t want to see so that you can be what you’ve always wanted to be.”
* Robert Hargrove, author of *Masterful Coaching*, emphasizes these same things; we as coaches of administrators must actively listen, must step back to get/help paint the big picture – seeing the forest as well as the trees, must check for the alignment of *thinking* and *behaviors* with *intension* in order to assure that the administrators become what they want to be, a leader of learning, and that they know they have the skills to do it.
* Coaching, then, is the practice of providing deliberate support to another individual to help him/her to clarify and/or to achieve goals. The easy part is learning/relating the “content” for the administrators, since as superintendents and evaluators of administrators many of you have walked in their shoes and know the “content.” The real work, according to the authors of *Blended Coaching*, is in the one-on-one relationships!
* Our jobs as coaches then become multi-faceted:
  + We must be goal oriented, preparing administrators to meet a set of well-articulated standards and benchmarks – the Iowa Standards for School Leaders and their criteria - as they work toward their building’s goals and action plan. It also leads us to quality information and support for those individuals as we complete a comprehensive evaluation.
  + We must work one on one with our principals/administrators, designing “lessons,” if you will, based on their individual needs in reaching those goals and the building’s/district’s action plan.
  + We must provide *direct instruction* when it is necessary – explaining and demonstrating around individual needs; we must *collaborate* whenever possible so that “the best” becomes “*our* ideas, *our* work,” not just yours as the superintendent; and we must strive for the *facilitative or supportive* level so that the “optimism and self-sufficiency” become the norm of the principals/administrators. First and foremost, we want principals/administrators with increased efficacy – who will engage in collaborative professional exchanges regarding improving practice, who are problem solvers and decision makers who will move their schools forward and ultimately our entire system.
  + We must observe in order to gather data and provide feedback.
  + We must use real situations, and simulations when the real are not available, to increase the administrators’ learning opportunities.
  + We must attend to the skills of the principal/administrator, but also to the stress, the perceptions, and the emotions of the individual.

**For Your Thinking and Preparation:**

We suggest that you also look at [Mod 4 - Tool 4.2 Sample ORID Questions 060207.doc](https://prairielakesaea.projectpath.com/projects/1314729/file/8003281/Mod%204%20-%20Tool%204.2%20Sample%20ORID%20Questions%20060207.doc) as your plan for your conversation. This is a “cheat sheet” of questions for your consideration as you plan for your collaborative conversation. You might also want to look at 4.6, a summary of “tools” we use in collaborative conversations. I have added both to this message for your convenience.

* + As you plan for your collaborative conversations, review the common situations that lend themselves to collaborative conversations:
  + Brainstorming: The generation of information will be the fundamental action in this collaborative conversation. Your role will be to remain nonjudgmental by applying the process of brainstorming – recognizing together as many as possible the ideas, reasons, causes, problems, interventions, or solutions that could be productive for the focus of the conversation.
  + Co-Planning: Evidence of co-planning will be your working together to plan an event (e.g., an initiative, a staff meeting, a professional development opportunity, a meeting with a parent). You might also extend a conversation about a co-planning opportunity through follow-up, which allows you to fully engage the administrator, creating a true collaboration, while still modeling and sharing ideas/approaches/processes that may be new to him or her.
  + Learners of Leading: This focus for the collaborative conversations allows the two of you to learn together evidence-based practices in leading. This common focus provides a launching point for creating new ideas and new strategies. The learning aspect is deepened when we identify and share feedback about the learning and actually set or refine goals and supportive actions based on the new learning and sharing. This focus might be the result of the reading of the same article, attendance at the same workshop or conference, or observation of the same video, DVD, or event.
  + Designing and Conducting Action Research: This takes the “learners of leading” to the next level, when you and the administrator co-plan a more formal action based on the new learning. For instance, you may have noted together the work of Doug Reeves in using the “measurable indicators of leadership, teaching practices, curriculum, parent involvement, and other factors” to determine the antecedents that are impacting student achievement in the building. You and the administrator could co-plan the actions of the administrator as he/she pursues implementing this process in his/her own building. Besides having you available to coach him/her through the implementation of the action, a norm of experimentation has been developed in the administrator; you are instrumental in facilitating a professional vision of lifelong learning.
  + Exploring Case Studies: When “real-life” opportunities are not available, you might consider the use of case studies in providing a context for focused conversations about the administrator’s practice. Most case studies are very open ended, and lend themselves to focused conversations that apply directly to his/her building and/or the district. Again, both the superintendent and the administrator become co-learners in the process, but each are free to bring his/her present knowledge and skills base to the table for the discussions.
  + As you continue to plan, identify the purpose of the conversation and then brainstorm possible questions you might use to guide the conversation. We suggest perhaps two for each level of the ORID questioning. Remember the purpose of the questions. In review:
  + **O – Objective** questions are asked to “set the tone,” to invite the individual into a focused conversation. Typical questions begin with “Who?’, “What?”, “When?”, “Where?”, and “How?”
  + **R – Reflective** questions, on the other hand are offered as the stepping stone to identify the desired outcome, the ideal state, with the actual results, the current reality. The questions tend to ask what individuals think or feel about a situation. They ask the participant to identify level of concern, reactions to situations, or identification of issues causing a “struggle.” Examples might include, “How did/do you feel about . . . ?” “What did/do you think about the . . . ?” “What had you hoped to . . . ?
  + **I – Interpretive** questions ask the administrator to reflect, taking the thinking to a deeper consciousness where options are explored and possible next steps are identified for consideration. Typical questions might include the following: “So what might be some options we could consider?’’; “What are some actions/activities we might include in this plan?” ; “What might be the result if we . . . ?”; or “What would the value be in . . . . ?” Your goal as a coach is to elicit possible solutions, options, opportunities. from your administrator. The goal in this level of questioning is to broaden the perspective or increase meaningful opportunities for consideration.
  + **D - Decisional** questions lead to the shift in the thinking and/or actions. “Now What” are we going to do? It should result in a conscious commitment to strengthening or changing a situation. Questions should lead not only to an identified outcome but to specific actions to get to that outcome. Those questions should also result in the identification of the indicators of success. Questions might include, “What is the plan to . . . ?; “What will be the next steps we take . . . ?”; “What supports/resources/assistance will we need?”; “How will we know you have arrived?”
  + You know you are getting better in the use of the ORID process when you are focusing on quality questions, paraphrasing, clarifying, probing, rather than presenting, directing, or “giving the answer.”
  + Note that the last two rows of the planning sheet are really for summarizing the accomplishments of the conversation – noting the responsibilities of the coach and the coachee, as a result of the conversation.
  + Once you complete the conversation, be sure to reflect on it, using the reflection form included in the tool.
  + Once the assignment is complete, do a “save” and then proceed to post it on the Wiki.